

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 remain in this application. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

The informality discussed by the Examiner in section 1 on page 2 of the Office Action is eliminated above.

Independent claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with claims 3-5, as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,992,263 to Bleuel et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,743,150 to Fevre et al. Reconsideration is requested. It is respectfully submitted that the Bleuel et al. and Fevre et al. patent disclosures, taken as a whole, fail to suggest that, in crimping, a punch is applied with an inner surface of a column jacket supported by a die as each of claims 1 and 2 now requires.

The Bleuel et al. patent discloses a bracket having projections at opposite upper ends thereof. Attachment of the projections to the jacket tube is performed by welding. Advantages achieved by way of the present invention achieved through having the projections on the bracket joined by crimping instead of welding, which could result in some disadvantages. Crimping as now set forth in claims 1 and 2 is certainly not suggested by the Bleuel et al. patent. The Fevre et al. patent, moreover, concerns a bracket having no projections at upper ends thereof. While attachment of the Fevre et al. bracket to the column jacket is performed by welding or crimping, there is no suggestion that a die is to be used to produce crimping. Crimping projections by application of a punch with an inner surface of a column jacket supported by a die is superior to other

crimping acts or operations, since plastic deformation by the die serves to a certain extent to define the bracket and column jacket joint strength. Again, the Bleuel et al. and Fevre et al. patent disclosures, taken as a whole, fail to suggest that, in crimping, a punch is applied with an inner surface of a column jacket supported by a die as now reflected in claims 1 and 2, and it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1 and 2 based on the Bleuel et al. and Fevre et al. documents should be withdrawn.

In section 4 on pages 3-4 of the Office Action, U.S. Patent 5,573,606 to Evans et al. is relied on, together with the Bleuel et al. and Fevre et al. patents, to reject claim 6. The Evans et al. patent, however, relates to an aluminum base die casting alloy and a method for making cast products from that alloy, and fails to suggest further modifying the Bleuel et al. assembly process to include the limitations discussed above.

Independent claims 1 and 2 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with claims 3-6, as unpatentable over “Applicant’s Admitted Prior Art (AAPA)” in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication 2006/0043720 to Sawada et al. Reconsideration of this rejection is also requested. Nothing in either the text appearing on pages 1-2 of this application or in the Sawada et al. publication suggests the temporarily fitting and crimping acts or operations in combination with a procedure in which a punch is applied with an inner surface of a column jacket being supported by a die as each of claims 1 and 2 now particularly require.

Both independent claim 1 and independent claim 2 above are considered patentable for reasons discussed above. The rest of the claim in this application are dependent claims and are considered patentable as well.

If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #038917.55521US).

Respectfully submitted,

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